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ii) a tabulation stage in which, for each data record, a cell of a result array is determined based on the numerical identifiers for that record, and the result array cell incremented.

2. (Twice Amended) A method as in claim 1, wherein the preprocessing stage includes generating from said data file an encoded data file containing the numerical identifiers for the data values in each field, and a mapping file which stores a correspondence between each of the distinct data values in the fields and the corresponding numerical identifiers.

**Please add the following new claims:**

B2  
13. (New) A method as in claim 1, wherein the preprocessing stage includes generating from said data file an encoded data file containing the numerical identifiers for the data values in each field, and a mapping file which stores a mapping information between each of the distinct data values in the fields and the corresponding numerical identifiers.